



## KEEPING GOATS QUICK START GUIDE

# Introduction



Goats are one of the oldest species of domesticated animals. There are nine species generally accepted as true goats with around three hundred breeds. Many small farmers or backyard raisers have found that they can earn from raising goats. Goats provide milk, meat, fiber, and hide which raisers can sell or use for themselves. If you are willing enough to try raising goats, you can start by raising one to two goats. Goat-raising is not easy but if you also willing to learn more about them, you can confidently raise goats either as pets or as livestock. This quick-start guide will give you basic information about goats and goat-raising.

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# Part I –

## The Goat





## I. What You Need To Know About Goats

Goats are herbivores. They fall under the genus *Capra*. What we know as the domestic goat is a subspecies of the family Bovidae. Goats are closely related to the sheep so that both animals will often exhibit similar traits. If you are serious about raising goats, you should start to memorize terms related to this venture. A female goat is called a "nanny" or "doe" and a young female is called a "doeling". A mother goat is referred to as a dam. A male goat is called a "buck" or "billy" and those that have been castrated are "wethers". A goat offspring is called a "kid". In Middle Eastern and Asian countries, goats are kept for agricultural purposes or sometimes as pets. In the US, goat-raising is finding its way to become a fast growing industry.

## A Short Goat History

The oldest goat fossils and evidence of goat domestication were found in Ganj-e Dareh, a Neolithic settlement located in Iranian Kurdistan dating back to thousands of years ago. Other places that also showed early signs of goat domestication include Euphrates River Valley in Turkey, Zagros Mountains in Iran, and Indus Basin in Pakistan. Archaeologists say that goat fossils found in these locations most probably belonged to domesticated goats since it is very unlikely that wild goats would have survived there on their own. In addition, the goat fossils had size and body shape different from wild goats.

Evidence of goat domestication show that they have been used as milk and meat sources as far back as 10,000 to 11,000 years ago during the Neolithic Age. Their dung was used as fuel and their hair, bones and sinew were utilized as clothing, and also as tools and materials for building. Goat hide served as water and wine bottles, and parchment. Goats were also used as currency in the barter system before the invention of coins.

**The Domestic Goat** The ancestors of the modern domestic goat came from Asia and Eastern Europe. Goats are sociable animals which made them easy to domesticate. They move in herds so they are easy to look after. A goatherd tends the goat herd which usually has five to twenty five heads. Goats communicate to each other by sight, smell or hearing. They have enough intelligence to make the obey orders from the goatherd.

You can easily observe the social structure followed by goats in their herd. Usually, there are two goats in the head. These are the head doe and the head buck. The leader is determined by means of duels. The rival goats butt their heads until one surrenders and the winner becomes the leader. Goats are naturally curious and intelligent. They are known to be highly alert animals that can quickly assess the danger in a situation, and react accordingly. They can jump up high places up to five feet.

There are about two hundred breeds of goat known to exist today. They fall into different categories based on their use or products they provide such as dairy, meat, fiber and skin. Some goats are bred to become companion animals.

## Basic Goat Facts

Goats have 24 molars in the back of their mouths both on the top and the bottom. Kids have 8 incisors in the lower front jaw. You can usually tell a goat's age by their teeth. Their stomach has four chambers which allow the goat to digest almost anything they feed on. Both bucks and nannies can grow beards. They generally dislike baths. Goats are ruminants which mean they chew their food, soften it in their first

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stomach, regurgitate it and chew the food again. Goats make bleating sounds which they use to express different moods.

Goats enter puberty at around seven to ten months of age. A buck's breeding age starts at around eight to ten months while a doe's at around one year. A female goat can have a maximum of 6 kids in one pregnancy. The gestation period is about 145 to 155 days. Their average life span is from eight to twelve years.

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## II. Owning Your First Goat



Being ready to own your first goat is important. Preparing yourself requires work but it is necessary in order to become successful. You need to check existing laws in your locality about keeping animals as pets. Since goats are not considered as traditional pets and have to be raised in farms, you have to review those laws and make inquiries if you will be allowed to keep them as pets. If you are going to keep your goat in your backyard, you would need to install a goat pen or fences even before you buy your first goat. You will also have to provide a clean, well-ventilated goat shelter. If you have a farm where you can raise your goats, you will have an easier time because they are farm animals anyway. They will have enough open areas for grazing.

In addition, you also have to make sure that you will be able to take care of their needs. Your schedule must permit you time to look after them or if not you personally, someone who has time and will to do it. You need to check your goats at least two times a day, making sure they are well fed and have enough water always.

### Pets or Livestock

As we have mentioned, goats are not traditionally kept as pets but there is a growing number of people who keep goats as pets. If you plan to get a goat for a pet, you have to be sure that you can provide for their primary needs as well as medical attention and, adequate grounds for

grazing or browsing. You should have them vaccinated, dehorned, and have their hooves properly trimmed. You can train certainly train them but it will take a lot of patience to do so. People call a trained goat “halter broke”.

Pygmy goats are usually kept as pets because they are alert, highly responsive and good natured. They are also able to adapt easily to varying climatic conditions. Many goat lovers prefer cashmere goats to keep as pets because of similar characteristics.

If you plan to keep goats as farm animals or livestock, you will have a wider selection of goat breed to choose from. The requirements are similar to keeping them as pets but in a larger scale and needs more dedication on your part.

## Goat Breeds

Goat breeds are classified according to their main use. To determine your choice, you need to know your reasons why you want to keep goats.

- a. **The Meat Goat** – Goat meat has lower fat content than lamb or beef. Because of this, raising goats for their meat is becoming very popular in the United States. Meat goats are bred to grow faster and relatively easier than other types. The most popular is the Boer goat.
- b. **The Dairy Goat** – In some areas, goat milk is better than cow milk. Goat milk is digested easily and has lower lactose content. Dairy goats are easier to tend than dairy cows since they can easily adapt to any environments. The 6 most common types of dairy goats include the Alpines, Nubians, Togenburgs, LaManchas, and the Saanens.
- c. **The Cashmere Goat** – A cashmere goat is any breed that produces cashmere wool, which is the goat's fine, soft inner coat hair. It is a fast growing business in the United States. It started in 1990 when Cashmere goats were initially imported from Australia and New Zealand.

## Getting the Right Goat for You

The right goat for you depends on your reasons for raising goats. The breed will depend on which of the breeds of a particular goat type is the best. This can be very difficult to do actually because there are many breeds to choose from for each type of goat. You are most probably not an animal specialist who can identify the particular goat that is best suited to you. One option open to you is to consult veterinarians or friends who have experiences in raising goats.

Once you have chosen the goat you want, the next step is to find the possible locations where you can obtain the goat. After finding the place, you have to assess the goats you find there before buying, basing your decision on the standards that the type of goat you want must have. The right goat for you among those that are there is the healthy one.

Another consideration for selecting the right goat is how much available space you have for your goat. A goat you intend to keep as a pet and raise in your backyard must be one of the smaller goat breeds. Goats for dairy production need a large enough space where you can build a milk shed. Large sized goats need a corresponding large area as well.

It is quite important that you know how to determine a goat's age. What you don't want is to get a very old goat that may die sooner than you think. You can do this by looking at the goat's set of teeth. Kids are born with 8 baby teeth. Goat raisers call a one year old goat a "two-toother" because the two baby teeth at the center front have been replaced by two permanent teeth. A two year old goat is called a "four-toother" for the same reason. The same principle is applied for the next two years. After four years, it is more difficult to tell the goat's age.

## How to Choose a Dairy Goat and a Meat Goat

A good nanny or doe must be angular, possessing prominent hip bones. Its body must be long, its thighs thin, with two straight, and wide apart

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front legs. Its back legs must have ample distance in between at the hocks. The escutcheon area must have a wide, arched opening. The udder should not have any scarring or bumps and must be well-attached.

Goat meat is called chevon or mutton. The body of a meat goat should be squared. It must look wide and heavy in the legs and chest and its back, flat and thick.

## **Horned and Unhorned Goats**

Both the buck and doe can grow horns and beards. Unhorned goats when born posses the gene associated with hermaphroditism. Hermaphrodite goats have both male and female sex organs. Hornless bucks are generally fertile but they cannot mate because their semen is usually blocked. All goats born with horns are usually fertile. Combining horned goats with hornless ones have a 25 to 50 percent chance of producing hermaphrodite goats with no further breeding possible.

## **Where Can You Buy Goats**

If you are just starting, you can contact an association for regional goat breeding. These associations have contacts with goat breeders. You can also look for local ranches and breeders. Be sure that the goats you will buy are healthy and have been under good caretakers. As much as possible, avoid buying from auctions because their current health condition cannot be assessed well.

## **Transporting Your Goat**

Goats are easily stressed and frightened so they should be transported with great care. Never lift them by their horns, head, legs, hair or ears. Hold their bodies firmly instead. When transporting several goats, make sure you separate the small ones from the big ones to prevent serious

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injuries. Always place beddings in their confinement space so that the goats will have secure footing. They scare easily if their foothold is unstable, especially when the vehicle moves. If you are transporting baby goats, it is better that you carry them yourself inside your vehicle. Have the goat seller deliver the goats to your farm or home if you don't have the right transport. Never put your goats in a vehicle parked under direct hot sunlight. Provide them with enough food and water for the duration of the travel specially if it's hot to reduce their stress.

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### III. Housing, Pasture and Nutrition Basics

The ideal housing for your new goats is dry and well-ventilated. The walls, floors and ceilings must always be dry because goats dislike being wet. Water and food containers must be sturdy and well-built. You should put these containers in a location where they will not be contaminated to avoid health problems.

You need to separate the nannies from the newborn kids, the growing kids and the non-lactating does, and especially from the bucks. To avoid bullying, you must also separate the horned goats from the hornless ones.

You should also provide a grazing and browsing area and a dry storage area for goat feeds, as well as a continuous fresh water supply. If you are raising dairy goats, you must also provide a milking area and an adequate manure disposal system.

#### Housing Facilities Requirements

The goat shelter must have adequate headroom so that the goatherds are able to stand up inside. Each goat should have at least four square meters of space where they can move freely. The height of the shelter

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door or pen must at least measure 1.3 meters or it could vary depending on the type of goats you have.

Their grazing area must be at least twenty five square feet for each goat. If you don't have enough area for grazing, and you house your goats in a confined space, you should provide an additional free space area of about 30 square feet for their exercise.

There are three important things you must consider in building the shelter, namely: ventilation, lighting and temperature.

Ventilation can affect the temperature, moisture and odor inside the shelter. The proper ventilation will ensure that fresh air, the right temperature and humidity levels are maintained inside. It will also reduce the level of ammonia that accumulates because of the manure.

Lighting is important too. Windows can let the sunlight in to provide warmth, vitamin D to the goats and help dry the interior of the shelter. To facilitate your night visits to the shelter, you must also install some lights inside.

High temperatures can affect the goats more than lower temperatures so it is important that you make steps to keep their shelter cool enough during the summer months.

You must not mix the young goats with goats intended for milking. It is better if you keep the kids in another box stall having a minimum area covering four square feet. This stall must have heat lamps for the newborn and sick kids. You can keep the older kids in another pen in one of the stable's corners.

Goat raisers use three types of fences for the area where they raise goats - exterior or perimeter, interior and barn lot fences. Perimeter fences are permanent structures surrounding the area. Interior fences subdivide the lot for different purposes, and they can either be permanent or temporary. Barn lots, also called corrals, are built to withstand the activities of the animals within. Goat fences can be constructed out of steel or wood.

## Goat Pasture

You must consider the type of species and the seeding rate of the pasture before you select the right one. This will have a great effect on the success of your goat raising efforts as goats must always have a nutritious diet. Goats like various plants for their food so your pasture must have high quality forages. The goats will thrive better on legumes and cool or warm season grasses instead of weeds and brush. Blue grass, smooth brome grass, reed canary grass and fescues are the best. Your pasture must also include orchard grass and alfalfa.

## Goat Feeds and Nutrition Basics

Each goat type has its own nutritional needs and requires its own feeding program. In addition, the required nutritional intake of goats depends on their developmental stage. You need to provide the right combination of fats and carbohydrates in their diet that will supply their energy needs. This is an important consideration since your goat's productivity depends on the available energy sources for them. Insufficient energy supply can result to stunted growth of kids, delayed puberty, reduced fertility and milk production. Goats also need high quality protein for cellular repairs and phosphorous for bone and muscle development.

Salt is an important part of a goat's diet. Lack of salt in their diet could result to reduced appetite and can drive goats to eat soil or debris. Other nutrients they need are sulphur, potassium, and magnesium which are needed to metabolize calcium and phosphorus and develop the right muscular tone. Goats also require vitamins A,D,E,K,C and B complex. You must not forget to always provide them with lots of water.

Your cheapest source of the right feed for your goats is pasture with high quality forages. However, your goats could also benefit from a balanced meal containing grains, shrub plants, hay and browse.

The formula for your goat feed will largely depend on the stage where your goat is at the moment. A pregnant doe for example requires a good quality pasture and hay. For nursing nannies with two kids, you should provide an additional 14-15% ration of crude protein. You should

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provide bucks with only 12 – 15% crude protein in their diet. The inactive bucks in your herd must be prevented from gaining weight.

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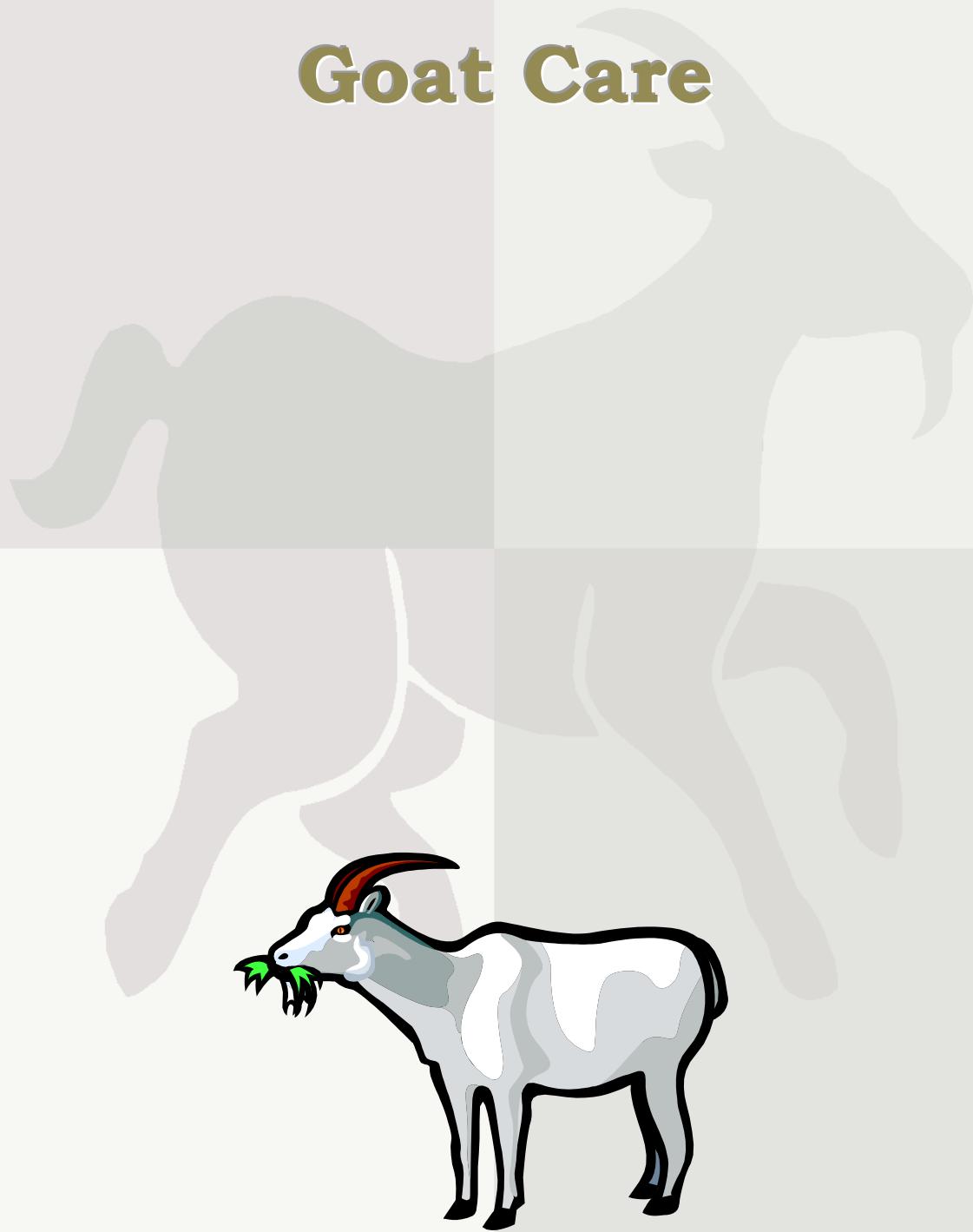
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# Part II –

## Goat Care



# I. Goat Grooming



Grooming your goats is a means not only to keep them clean but also to ensure that they are healthy. It involves several procedures such as horn removal or dehorning, disbudding, hair care and hoof care. Goats like to be groomed and grooming them is a good way to spend time with your goats. They become presentable and it makes them feel really loved.

## Horn Removal

You might have observed your goats use their horns to fight other goats to establish leadership. Horns are used for attacking, but they are also there to protect the goat's skull. They can also function as temperature or blood supply regulators. The annual rings on the horns show the age of goats too. Horns also serve as convenient handles when you need to control your goats.

While horns serve a purpose of the benefit of the goat, they are very dangerous to the people handling the goats and to other goats as well, especially if you are raising several goats in a herd, or as a pet. They should be removed. There are two ways to do this, namely: dehorning and disbudding.

1. Dehorning. This process involves removing grown horns from mature goats. Horns are part of the goat's skull so only a

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veterinarian should do this as this is a difficult and bloody operation.

2. Disbudding. This method refers to the removal of horn buds from young goats. This is the preferred way to remove horns. It is usually done when the male kid is 3 days old and 4 days old for female kids. You must do it at the right time or disbudding may result to scurs.

## **Hoof Care**

Goat hooves require great attention and care to keep them in shape. You must not neglect these parts or the goats may suffer health problems. The environment and climate affect the hooves' condition. They must be trimmed especially when the weather is wet. You need to give tetanus shots before doing it because trimming can injure the hooves and let tetanus in. You can also give them footbaths to avoid other hoof problems.

## **Coat care**

While the other grooming procedures involve cutting and deliberately injuring the goat, you can consider hair care as the least painful and gentler way to keep your goats presentable. You need to remove flakes, lice, fleas, mites, ring worms and other nasty parasites from the goat's hair by brushing. This is usually done after winter when the goats don't really need their coat.



## II. Goat Health and Sickness

It is important that you know the signs of a sick or injured goat so you can take the necessary steps to prevent further health problems. Goats are generally quite so that when they bleat or cry, you will know that something is amiss with them. They will bleat or cry when they are thirsty, hungry, ill or pregnant. If they are hungry or thirsty, they will emit a sustained bleating that gets louder as they become more hungry or thirsty. Pregnant nannies will behave differently too. The key to knowing what is affecting your goats to make them bleat is to be really observant.

Healthy goats are always energetic. Their tails are usually above their back, their coats shiny, their stand balanced, and their eyes appear bright and alert. Goats that exhibit the opposite traits are unhealthy.

You need to have your goats vaccinated against diseases such as rabies, caseous lymphadentitis, tetanus, type C or D enterotoxemia, sore mouth, and abortion. Veterinarians usually recommend that these vaccines be administered to young goats.

### Common Goat Diseases

There are a number of common goat diseases that you need to be aware of. These include viral, bacterial and parasitic diseases. Many of the symptoms are similar for each disease so you need to carefully observe

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which ones corresponds to the right disease. Some of the most common diseases of goats include colds, ketosis, mastitis, grain overload, milk fever, pizzle rot, urinary stones, polioencephalomalacia, abortion due to iodine deficiency, and white muscle disease.

## **Parasite Control and Deworming**

Stomach parasites such as coccidian and worms can cause great damage to your goat's health, and may even lead to death. You need to have a program for parasite control and deworming to make sure that parasites do not affect your goats' health.

You have to make sure that your pasture is clean and safe. You need to implement rotation of pasture for at least seventy days to ensure that it is clean. You can apply anti-parasitic drugs but you need to be careful since these drugs can make the worms immune to them.

Pregnant does must be dewormed before they give birth so prevent newborn kids from being infected too.

## **Skin Problems**

Skin problems in goats can be caused by fungi, virus, bacteria or parasite. Ringworms are caused by fungi and it is the most common skin problem in goats. You can treat it with a skin disinfectant for at least one month. Sore mouths are caused by a virus. It usually affects the lips and teats of female goats, and can cause abortion in pregnant nannies. This disease can be treated with a vaccine. Bacteria can cause infections. You can treat them by cleaning the affected area using appropriate anti-bacterial products. Parasites such as lice can cause anemia because they suck the blood out of the animal. You can get rid of them by using an insecticide or a topical medicine.

## **First Aid Kit**

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It is quite common for goats to be injured and have wounds. You can handle some of them but there may be cases when you have to call for help. For emergency cases, you need to know how to administer first aid and for this you have to have your own first aid kit which should include materials and general supplies for administering first aid procedure.

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### III. Goat Breeding Basics



Being able to breed goats will set you apart from other mediocre goat raisers. However, to become successful, you need to know more about the goat's reproductive cycle, including the right age to breed, and other related factors that affect the goat's fertility.

#### Reproductive cycle

The reproductive season for does usually begins in February to March and usually extends to June or July. Ovulation generally occurs from two to ten days after the buck is introduced to the doe. Some goat raisers encounter a problem in interpreting the signs showed by does during the reproductive cycle because there are does that exhibit signs of estrus (the period when the doe is most sexually receptive) even after they have been bred already. You should be able to tell the difference by observing when the estrus cycle begins and the signs of pregnancy. The doe's first estrus usually occurs late in the summer until the middle of winter. Each estrus cycle may last for about 21 days. Signs of estrus include frequent urination, tail flagging, and mounting of other does. Recognizing the signs of estrus is important because they will be your basis in determining when mating of the doe and buck will produce the desired results.

## Breeding age

Does usually enter their estrus period during autumn when the days are shorter and the nights are longer. The breeding age for nannies is one year old. The gestation period is 5 months or approximately 150 days. This means that if you are successful in breeding during the fall season, your does will give birth during spring.

You must also look at the doe's weight in determining if the goat is ready for breeding and reproduction. A doe should be about 75 pounds on average to be considered fit for mating.

## Mating Ritual

You can see young goats mount other young goats, even as young as seven to ten days old. They mimic the behavior of adult goats. You can observe some young bucks smelling a young doe's urine to see if she is already in heat. A healthy buck in the peak of sexual maturity can breed up to 50 does. A doe in estrus shows her receptivity to sexual activity by wagging her tail, a practice which goat raisers call flagging. The buck will usually urinate on his face, including the beard and front legs. He will then approach the doe that has flagged him. The doe will respond by squatting and urinating, and the buck will place his nose in her urine stream to find out if she is in fact in heat.

The sexual performance of a buck can be affected by diseases caused by parasitic infections. To prevent this, you should start to deworm all your goats before and during the season for breeding. It is also important that you conduct a thorough physical examination and make sure that all their reproductive parts are in order. You should also look at their hooves and trim them as needed because infected hooves can affect how the buck will mount the doe.

## Pregnancy

A veterinarian will decide if your does are ready to become pregnant or not. Goat breeders usually have a vet examine their goats during late summer or early fall to determine the readiness of the does destined for breeding purposes. Even for some experienced breeders, determining pregnancy in a doe is hard. A doe can show signs of pregnancy even if she is not pregnant at all. A doe may appear to go through a cycle of estrus several times even while she is already pregnant. Using an ultrasound machine your veterinarian can detect true pregnancy at forty five days of gestation. Hormone levels in the doe's blood or milk can also reveal pregnancy, as well as the levels of a specific protein in the blood.

The gestation period lasts for about 150 to 155 days, starting from the time the egg is implanted in the uterus until kidding. You can already see the limb segments or buds between twenty eight and thirty five days. After twenty days, you can detect foetal heartbeat. Foetal stage ends on the forty second day. By the forty first day, female foetus will show mammary buds while the male foetus will show scrotal sac. The eyes and nostrils will become apparent too. On the 56<sup>th</sup> day, the ear canal opens and the eyelids close. The scrotal vessels and the jugular and facial vein will become visible by the 60<sup>th</sup> day. The ear vein and horn pits will be prominent when the young goat reaches the 84<sup>th</sup> day in its mother's womb. At around day 90, hair will start to grow in its forehead. The male foetus' testes can already be felt in the scrotum at this point. Fine hair will cover almost the entire body on the 126<sup>th</sup> day and by the 140<sup>th</sup>, the body will then be covered by dense hair. Kidding occurs usually between the 150<sup>th</sup> and 155<sup>th</sup> day. A doe may have one to three kids per pregnancy.

You must not neglect the normal health needs and feeding practices for your pregnant does. The need their usual feed and mineral supply during the first three months of pregnancy. You must be careful not to over feed them as this might cause problems that could lead to abortion. Correct feeding practice will ensure that the does will have healthy lactation and that they will be in excellent health condition when she gives birth.

Because stress can cause the doe to abort, you must be careful not to subject them to stress. Stress can disrupt the function of the corpus luteum which produces the progesterone hormone that keeps the goat's pregnancy normal. Poor nutrition, the presence of predators or other unfamiliar animals, transporting the goats can cause stress.

Pregnant does can experience complications and other pregnancy problems. The most common ones include congenital and development defects such as cleft palate, absence of rectal opening and mummification; uterine rupture, which results from the pushing/pulling/rearranging of the kid within the uterus; uterine torsion, where the uterus is twisted; ringwomb, which refers to the incomplete cervical dilation resulting from inadequate hormone and mineral levels; toxemia and ketosis, which is a condition caused by improper nutrient supply; periparturient edema, a swelling of the doe's lower legs usually associated with multiple foetuses; mastitis, a condition where the udder swells, hardens and become hot as a result of bacterial infection; retained placenta, which is caused by toxoplasmosis or chlamydiosis both abortion diseases; metritis, or uterine infection resulting from dead kids inside the uterus or retained placenta.

You can avoid most of these complications if you keep your does in excellent health condition before letting them breed and during the gestation period.

## Kidding

The doe's body will undergo many changes as it prepares for kidding. Her udder becomes swollen. She becomes restless, paws the ground and pushes her head against the wall. When you see her do this, its time to get ready and have clean gloves, towels, warm water and lubrication within easy reach. She will kid anytime now.

The process of kidding starts as soon as the water sac breaks. The kid will start to move through the birth canal. You may have to assist at this point. The kid's feet usually come out first with the hooves pointing downward, followed by the nose. You don't need to assist when this happens. There could be another kid behind and the doe may have to change her position several times to let the kid out of the birth canal. Next to come out will be the head. You may have to assist this time if you see the doe struggle with the effort to push the kid out. You can apply lubrication jelly around the opening to help it stretch and relax. Once the kid is complete out, you use the clean towels to wipe the mucus out of the kid's mouth. If it's not breathing, grab its hind legs and hang it

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upside down and help it breathe. Repeat the procedure for the other kids. Take the newly born kid(s) to the nursery where you will have to treat the umbilical cord with 7% iodine to avoid navel joint disease. You need to milk the mother doe and give the colostrum rich milk within the first 24 hours preceding birth.

## Raising Kids

You need to put the kids and the mother inside one stall for the first few days after birth. This will allow them to bond together unbothered by the other goats in the herd, and the kids can nurse without being disturbed. You must make sure that the kids are getting enough milk and that they nurse from evenly from both sides of the mother's udder. This will prevent any udder from becoming full of milk which could be quite painful.

After two weeks, you can expect the newly born kids to spend more time with other goats. You can take this opportunity to milk the mother. At three weeks of age, you can administer vaccine shots to the kids against tetanus and enterotoxemia. At the fourth week, you can start castrating (wether or neuter) the young males you don't want to keep as bucks. By the sixth week, you can administer booster shots of the vaccines you have given earlier. You can start selling the young goats at eight weeks old.

There is no need for you to be concerned about weaning the young goats as this can only cause stress to the mother and the kids. The mother is perfectly capable to naturally wean her kids on her own.

## Goat Castration

Castration or the removal of testicles of male kids only a few days old, is done to stop them from developing aggressive behaviors when they mature. They often turn more aggressive as they become older and may butt you. Intact adult males will also have an offensive odor, especially while the breeding season lasts. There are several ways to do this.

- **Burdizzo** – This is a metal instrument used to sever or crush the blood vessels and cords that lead to the testicles. Such action will prevent blood flow to the testicles resulting to its degeneration within the scrotum. The procedure is done internally and is totally bloodless.
- **Elastrator** – this method cuts off the blood supply to the testicles with the use of a heavy rubber band or ring. This will make the scrotum dry up and fall off within two weeks. This is also a bloodless method but will cause some pain to the kid for about ten to fifteen minutes. There is no open wound so the risk of infection is nil.
- **Traditional Knife** – Using clean and sterile knife is usually the least expensive but most reliable castration method. A knife is used to cut the bottom part of the scrotum. Each testicle is then pulled out. The cord is then torn (not cut with a knife) to avoid excessive bleeding. The bottom part of the scrotum is allowed to remain open for drainage. Because this method leaves an open wound, you will need to watch out for possible infection.

You need to observe carefully the newly castrated kids for several days for signs of infection regardless of the castration method you used. Always consult with your veterinarian if you think there is something wrong with the kids.

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# Part III –

# Goat Products





## I. Goat Milk

Unlike in the United States, goat milk is more popular than cow milk in many parts of the world. Goat milk is naturally delicious, slightly sweet with a hint of saltiness. It doesn't have to be homogenized because it already has an even consistency and the cream doesn't separate from the rest of the milk contents. People who are sensitive to cow milk will find goat milk the best alternative because, even if goat milk also has lactose, it is very digestible and doesn't produce the symptoms associated with lactose intolerance.

Compared to cow's milk, goat milk contains more nutrients: 350% more niacin, 13% more calcium, 47% more vitamin A, 25% more vitamin B6, , and 134% more potassium. Additionally, goat milk has more copper, manganese, chloride and selenium. It also doesn't contain Bovine Growth Hormone or BGH.

### Goat Milking Basics

It is important to ensure that the milk is free from possible contamination and that the goats are comfortable during the milking process. For this purpose, you need to put up an appropriate structure for milking, such as a milking barn or milking house. Its flooring must be made of concrete or any impervious material to facilitate cleaning. Wood is not a suitable flooring material because it can be a breeding place for bacteria. It is also difficult to clean. Regulatory agencies

usually require that the structure's ceilings and walls must be smooth, dust-tight and painted so that they are easy to clean and kept that way. It must be kept structurally sound and the floor must be smooth, have accessible drains and slope away from where the milk room is located to ensure cleanliness and that water will not pool on the floor. The door between the milking barn and the milk room must be tight fitting and self-closing. Ventilation must be sufficient in order to prevent the build-up of odor and condensation on the walls and ceilings. You must also install a wash sink with two compartments and hot running water.

You must also set up a separate milk room with enough space where goat milk can be cooled and stored. This will reduce possible contamination from the milking house or barn. This room will also be used to wash, sanitize, and store all the milking equipment and utensils, which must be made of non-absorbent, smooth, non-toxic, and corrosion-resistant materials such as heat-resistant glass, stainless steel, or inert, fat-resistant, non-odor rubber or plastic. Pails you will use for hand-milking and stripping must be seamless and have small mouth to prevent contamination by foreign matter. Milk cans must have umbrella type lids and milk storage tanks must have working cooling system. If you have a small goat raising venture and your milk production is only on a small scale, you can store milk immediately in a refrigerator or any suitable temperature controlled storage.

The quality and cleanliness of the water supply have a great influence on the overall quality of the milk. Your water supply should be safe and secured, and must comply with the requirements of the Clean Water Act as implemented by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), as well as local or state standards.

You must also have a waste treatment system to make sure that there will be no animal waste contamination of ground and surface water. The EPA and your State Milk Sanitation Division can help you design and implement the waste management system of your goat farm.

To legally operate a commercial dairy farm in the country, you need to obtain a Grade A permit from your state regulatory agency. Once you have it, you must comply with all the requirements and inspections needed to operate your dairy farm. One such requirement is the submission of milk samples from your goats.

## Milking Procedure

One important factor that you must remember always in milking a goat is sanitation. Unsanitary conditions during the milking process will greatly undermine your efforts in producing goat milk. You must take steps to prevent bacteria from contaminating not only the teats of the goat but all the materials and utensils used in the milking procedure. You must wear sterile latex gloves or if you don't want to wear them, you must wash your hands very thoroughly and keep them clean all the time while milking the goats.

The following are the basic materials and utensils for hand milking your goat:

- ➊ Seamless bucket made of stainless steel for the milk
- ➋ A bucket large enough to hold the milk bucket and ice water.
- ➌ Clean, dry cloth to used for filtering the milk
- ➍ Large-mouth stainless steel or glass container to receive the filtered milk.
- ➎ Larger plastic or glass receptacle for storage in a temperature controlled room
- ➏ Rags and bucket for wash water
- ➐ Some dry towels

After putting together all the materials and utensils listed above, you can now begin the milking process.

- ➊ Place feed in the feed bowl attached to the milking stand
- ➋ Lead the goat to be milked in her position in the milking stand

- ➊ When the head of the goat is in the right position, lock the stanchion
- ➋ Attach hobble to the goat's front legs.
- ➌ Use hot soapy water to wash the udder and teats
- ➍ Put the covered milk bucket beneath the udder.
- ➎ Wear your gloves and dry the teats with dry towels.
- ➏ With your thumb and forefinger, hold the teat near the top firmly but not too tight. Squeeze the teat to express a small amount of milk into a small receptacle using your other fingers.
- ➐ Check the milk that comes out for any discoloration, blood, clots or lumps.
- ➑ If the first strip of milk has no undesirable characteristics, proceed to uncover the milk bucket and start to milk the goat until flow stops. (If the milk has a questionable appearance, go on with the milking but discard the milk. Do not attempt to drink it.
- ➒ To avoid any contamination, cover the milk bucket immediately.
- ➓ Clean the milking stand with wash water.
- ➔ Rinse all used equipment with cold water and wash with hot soapy water.
- ➕ Allow the equipment to air dry.

## Goat Milk Handling

You have to make sure that the milk is cooled properly. See to it that there is no foam present on the milk surface. To ensure that milk is

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cooled to the right temperature, you can place the milk bucket in an ice bath. You can tell that the milk has cooled adequately when the ice cubes have melted completely. The next step is to strain the goat milk into a clean container. You must then weigh the milk and record the quantity and weight in your record sheet. Lastly, pour the milk from the filter container to another where it will be stored in a temperature controlled place.

## Dairy Products from Goat Milk

Just like cow's milk, goat milk also has many uses. You can drink it straight or add as an ingredient in cooking and baking. It can also be used to make butter, cheese, yogurt, ice cream, candy, and even beauty products such as soap. Cheese and butter made from goat milk is whiter because goat milk itself is whiter than cow's milk. Dairy products from goat milk are usually smoother and creamier too because goat milk contains smaller curd and smaller fat globules.

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## II. Goat Meat



The taste of goat meat (called chevon from an adult goat and cabrito from a young goat), is rather strong and gamey. But depending on how the meat is prepared and how the goat was raised, its flavour can turn mild. Goat meat is a healthier choice because it is leaner and contains less fat and cholesterol than beef and lamb. You only need low heat and slow cooking to enjoy its tenderness.

### Goat Meat Market

Goat meat is a staple in Africa and South/Central America, and Asia. It is also very popular in India, the Middle East, the Caribbean and Pakistan. Europeans consider goat meat a delicacy. In the United States, local producers cannot meet the growing demand for goat meat so that approximately 1.5 million pounds have to be imported from New Zealand and Australia each week. The demand usually comes ethnic groups such as African, Latin American, Caribbean, Middle Eastern and Asian. The greatest demand today comes from the Hispanic ethnic group since they consume more goat meat among them all. However, the greatest potential market for goat meat is the Muslim market. Goat meat is a traditional part of Middle Eastern cuisine. However, goat products have to conform to the dietary laws of Muslims, which means that they have to be "Halal", which in turn means that a Muslim butcher must be the one to slaughter the animal while conforming to other Muslim law

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requirements for butchering a goat. Included in this group also are people from India, Somalia and Pakistan.

## Goat Meat Recipes

There are many ways you can prepare and serve goat meat. You can make it as the main ingredient in a stew or curry dish. You can either grill it or bake it; make sausages, kabobs or jerky out of it. Goat meat can be prepared minced, fried or even canned. In Japan, people serve it raw in thin slices called "yagisashi". In India, goat meat is used as the main ingredient in biryani. Goat curry is a favorite Indo-Caribbean dish. Many Mexican, Argentine and Brazilian goat recipes use cabrito instead of the usual chevon as the main ingredient. Cabrito is a goat kid. In Greece and Southern Italy, whole goats are served roasted, especially during Easter celebrations while people in Bavaria prepare braised goat meat.

Goat meat is a versatile meat and you can substitute it for any recipe that calls for red meat or beef.

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### III. Other Goat Products

We have seen that goats are valuable animals. They provide not only milk and meat, but also for certain goat types, provide companionship to people. But they also give us other products of great value and benefit to us.

**Fibers** – While the usual source of animal fibers made into fabric is sheep, two of the most expensive ones come from goats. These are mohair and cashmere.

- **Mohair** is produced by Angora goats. This is different from Angora fiber (from the Angora rabbit) and Angora wool. Mohair is the yarn or fabric that is similar to silk, and comes from the Angora goat's hair.
- **Cashmere** comes from the fine undercoat of the cashmere goat. It is considered as the most exotic and rarest of all fibers known to the world. It is prized for being soft, durable, lightweight and very warm.

**Hide** – You can make different products out of goat skin such as parchment or drumheads. Tanned goat skin is highly durable and makes good material for rugs. Carpet manufacturers use it as binding material for their products. Leather from goat skin is used for making boots, gloves, and other personal products that require soft hide. The Spanish wine bota bag uses goatskin leather as material.

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**Catgut** – This is a tough thin cord made out of natural fiber from the intestinal wall of the goat or sheep. Catgut has been used as strings for many musical instruments such as lutes, harps, violas and violins. It has also been used to string tennis rackets and used as surgical ligatures. Nowadays however, synthetic or steel strings have replaced catgut.

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## Conclusion – Goat Keeping Economics



Meat goat production is receiving a lot of attention in the US these days. This fact can be due to the increasing demand for goat meat by the Muslim, Hispanic and Caribbean communities in the country. In addition, the current trends towards green farm management points to using goats as a form of natural vegetation control. For small farm operations, you will find that raising goats is easier and more economically profitable than raising a herd of cows. Goats being raised for their meat are easy-care creatures and you don't need to spend much to provide feeds and shelter for the animals. However, just like any farming operations, you need to possess the necessary skills and knowledge to ensure success. You need to investigate prevailing market conditions, make cost estimates, and create a budget estimate before even considering buying your first goat. As a prospective goat raiser, your most important consideration must be your target market. Knowing that there is a market for goat meat will certainly be a major tipping point for your decision to go ahead. Combining such knowledge with dedication, perseverance and hard work will ensure that your goat raising business will be successful.

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